

Movie Makers

November—December, 2002

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The American Motion Picture Society

Sponsors of the oldest continuing Film/video Festival in the world.

Making South by South West

Ned Cordery & Alberto Kniepkamp.

Making it into the Ten Best of the West with our production South by South West came as something of a surprise to me and Alberto Kniepkamp, my long time friend and co-worker. A pleasant surprise we must say and perhaps the story of our video may be of interest to members of the AMPS.

We are new to South West Utah and are constantly amazed by the scenery, not only its size but also its range from tree clad 10,000 foot mountains to sandy deserts, high mesas and buttes, deep canyons and distant views. Our friends and relatives in various parts of the US and the world were intrigued and asked for a

visual record of this wonderland. Our first attempt was when we attended a course at the local college offering an introduction to NLE on their Media 100 suite and as long-time film and linear editors we enjoyed the course and produced a short tour of the area cut to music. It was OK but lacked a coherent theme and a human dimension. It did gain some notoriety as it was rumored we had sold it to a Japanese TV station, completely untrue.

We decided to use the scenery as the main player in a story of hidden treasure. The Spanish priests who explored this area in the 18th Century didn't find any treasure but we felt that history could be bent a little to accommodate our scenario. We decided to limit ourselves to working within a 30 mile radius of our base in St George, without a limit where to stop with

several lifetimes of scenery out there? We prepared the script based on a group of 18th Century explorers who had found and stolen treasure from the local inhabitants, hidden it and were now pursued across this land leaving clues to their trail at each resting place. We worked back along the trail from their final resting place. Our props comprised the messages carefully aged by screwing up and then cooking in the oven, small ceramic pots to

hold them at each location, some amazingly durable hesian wrapping, some small artifacts - a rosary and a genuine 18th Century book, plus a rather plastic skull. I became the explorer who follows the trail, fortunately little was demanded in the way of acting skills and Alberto did all the shooting.

(Continued on page 5)

inside...

Technical
Edit Prep
Mix and Match
Photos from the Convention

page 3
page 4
page 6
page 7

Movie Makers

Dedicated to the interests of the Serious Motion Picture Maker.

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**George W. Cushman
Founder,
1909-1996**

Matt Jenkins, Editor

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From The Editor

The combined AMMA, TBW, AMPS convention was a great success. Congratulations to the San Diego Moviemakers club for their efforts in putting this conference together.

I want to recognize Roger Garretson for his excellent showing in all of the competitions this year. Not only did he place in the American International Film and Video Festival, he placed in the Magic Moments with "Diesel Fitter" which was an extremely funny production, if you haven't seen it try to. Roger also won the prestigious Oscar Horovitz award.

I want to thank Roger and his wife for taking the time to show me around San Diego on my first trip to California. Their hospitality was extremely generous.

I was looking forward to Wally Shaw's presentation on make up and hair. And I enjoyed it very much. In fact I had a delightful conversation with Wally at the San Diego airport while we were waiting for our flights home. It is easy to see that Wally loves movie making very

much.

Sid Laurents' presentation on his picture "Multiple Sidosis" was extremely interesting as well.

And I received many nice comments regarding my own presentation covering studying old movies for production techniques to use in our own movies. Thank you!

For those of you who did not attend this year's convention don't worry! Next year's convention is already in the planning stage. It will take place in Buena Park, California. I will see you there.

My own productions are moving along. I am using the new AVID DV 3.5 on a Dell with 2 120 GB hard drives for video storage. I find that I really like the ease with which I can edit. However, working with the audio is very time consuming in order to get the right mix. And even though I mix using meters, I find that I am making copies and playing the production through other TV's in order to determine the audio quality.

As always you may e-mail your questions or comments to me at mattj@cameron.edu.

And by the way happy holidays and have a great new year!

TECHNICAL

Jim Beach

The 2002 Convention of Amateur Movie Makers is over and it was a huge success thanks to the San Diego club hosts and much effort on the part of the dedicated leaders of AMPS, AMMA and Ten Best of the West. Congratulations and many thanks to all whose efforts made it possible.

My impression is that each year our amateur movies, I prefer to call them home made movies, are getting better and better. I attribute that to a number of factors.

The competitive spirit, generated by our local clubs and club association contests, spurs us on to make movies and improve our skills. The commingling of those movies at our annual conventions gives us the opportunity to see and learn from the work of our peers.

The constant technical improvements in our equipment for capturing and editing the images and sounds make it easier for amateurs to make good movies. Advanced technology does not make a good movie; this ability comes from observing the work of both professional and amateur moviemakers and following the basic premises of movie-making unless there is a considered reason to deviate. These advances in technology can make good movies visually and aurally more attractive with sharper images, better

color and clearer narration.

Ingenuity, improvisation and attention to detail, are all that's needed for lighting and sound effects. Advanced technology does little but add cost for the amateur moviemaker.

It seemed to me that most of the movies were made with DV and many were edited with non-linear editing systems although many of the winners were not. Some may have been transferred from film. In any event all of the winners exhibited well although the projection system washed out color and detail to some degree. It is usually a bit disappointing to see your movie projected for the first time; projected video seldom looks as good as it did at home on a good monitor or TV screen. Top of the line projectors cost more than most clubs can afford.

Of the 72 people attending there were a number of newcomers and a few young people; Let's hope they are amateur moviemakers and that we can attract more with movies that appeal to a broad range of interests.

Speaking of seeing and learning from the work of others, the talk by Matt Jenkins, "How to examine motion pictures to find techniques to use in your own production" was very informative. He pointed out by showing clips from old movies innovative cinematography techniques that made the movie more interesting. Perhaps from seeing these we will be more aware and look for methods we can use to

make more appealing movies.

Matt Jenkins the editor of the AMPS newsletter is an associate professor of Communication at Cameron University in Lawton Oklahoma where he teaches courses in television production. Matt's passion is producing short movies and documentaries.

One of the patriarchs of amateur moviemakers and a member of the San Diego Amateur Movie Makers Club since 1959, Sid Laverents, showed us by slides and movies how he made the very innovative filmed movie called Multiple Sidosis. This film, the only amateur movie selected by the National Film registry in 2000, was preserved for all time in a supersharp 35mm print by the UCLA Film and Television Archive. It is now in the company of some of the most famous professional motion pictures.

We can all learn from Sid's movies and admire the innovative ways he made this multilayered movie using film before the days of amateur video and computerized compositing. By the way, Sid is a 94 years young amateur movie-maker today. He is working on his autobiography

"The First 94 Years are the Hardest" to be out this fall.

I arrived at the convention the second day and missed the talk called "Blood, Tears, and Movies" by DR. Shaw, "Wally", as he prefers to be called by his fellow amateur filmmakers is also a patriarch

(Continued on page 5)

Edit Prep

Ned Cordery

It's the preparation before the edit starts that makes the difference between an interesting and creative experience and a chaotic mess for me. The more time spent preparing then the better the creative juices flow when I get down to working on the timeline. I have two edit suites, FCP3 on a Mac G4 with Mac OS 9.2.2 and Cinestream 3.1 on a PC with Windows XP Home. Why two systems? Well, I began non-linear editing five years ago on a very early (beige) Mac G3 using EditDV, the fore-runner of Cinestream, and it retains a well earned place in my affections but the support for it has eroded and after four different owners it is now languishing in an almost forgotten corner of Discreet. When I moved to the USA I decided to go with software that would be well supported and developed in to the future and this really gave me only two options, Avid Xpress DV or FCP and with a strong Mac background I chose FCP. Apologies to all the very successful Premiere users, I worked with a very early version and found it very clunky when compared with EditDV. For those who want to try the delights of Cinestream for Windows it is available at B&H for \$99 - in my opinion the bargain of the year.

The basics of NLE are shared across programs and platforms and mimic what we used to do with film. We still use clips and store them in bins ready for the work, the big difference is that the clips come with the ambient

sound attached to them and in sync - a huge improvement. They can also be used again and again, trimmed and retrimmed and spring back to life ready for the next experiment, the wonders of non-destructive editing.

The first preparation requirement is that we know our material, I transfer to VHS with time-code written to the VHS tape from the DV original and watch several times until I have a good idea of which shots are usable and which are not. This makes it possible to do a paper edit, although with modern NLE systems paper edits are becoming a thing of the past, so I just note the in points of the clips to be loaded.

There are three ways we can capture from our camera tapes to the HDs of the computer. On the fly, where we set the in point as we watch the clip and then when we get to a suitable ending, set the out point and then save directly to the hard drive. Batch Capture, where we select the in and out points as we watch the clips or from a preview, store them and then set up for the program to automatically capture and load the clips to the hard drive. The third method is an automated process that identifies the camera start/stop and captures each clip giving them sequential numbers but leaving the editor to sort through the clips, identify them, name them and discard the unwanted clips.

In all these methods we are asked to identify the reel number of the original camera tape. My reel numbering system is very simple. The first number is

the year i.e. 2 for 2002 then sequentially numbered from 200, this gives room for 99 tapes in a year. If you shoot more than 99 in a year then work from 2000.

It is important for the subsequent work flow to know what the clips are to be used for in relation to the program. This is where the Bins are so valuable. I assign the bins numbers and names, e.g. "Bin 1 Opening" "Bin 2 The cave" "Bin 3 Travel" and so on, the names defining the scene and the number being in the chronological order of the finished program. So into Bin 1 go clips numbered starting 100 each with a brief description, Bin 2 starts at 200, Bin 3 at 300 and so on. I create additional bins for storing audio and other imported media. Both my NLE systems let me renumber and rename clips, move them to other bins and generally reorganize my media to meet my specific needs.

A typical bin will look like this;

Bin 3 travel

300 Exterior jeep.
301 Ext jeep moving off.
302 Ext LS jeep from hill
302 Int jeep, driver
303 Int hands on steering wheel
304 Int view of road

and so on. In addition to my numbers and descriptions there will be the usual captured info about clip duration, in and out point TC, audio frequency etc.

With all this preparation completed it is time to edit and the work flow is easy and straightforward. When working on the

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 1)

The camera used was a completely standard Sony VX1000, the only addition being a Rycote wind gag as we wanted to use the ambient sound. A Bogen tripod with a video head was used for all the shots. We did our shoot over two days and ended up with just under two hours recorded on Sony miniDV tape. Given the overpowering light levels the ND filter was in use most of the time. This was in February so it was possible to go from a warm desert area to frozen streams in the mountains and stay within our 30 mile radius, amazing!

The voice over segments were recorded to DAT in Alberto's studio, edited and then transferred to CDR as AIFF files. The edit was done on my Mac G4 using FCP2. The first cut was made using commercial music as the guide track and ended up running over 25 minutes. We decided to remove one of the scenery segments, this got us to just under 20 minutes but when we tested the rough cut on our wives it was obvious we had a problem with the ending. We had to clarify the fact that the treasure was now buried under a dam at a local reservoir; the first cut did not make this very clear so half a day of reshooting was necessary. Back to the edit suite and it still took two attempts to ensure that the ending was clear without resorting to a voice over to describe where the treasure was located, the last thing we wanted to do.

With our just under 20 minute version complete Alberto composed and recorded the music

using a Roland midi-controller key board, a Roland VX 5080 sound module and Cakewalk's Sonar software on a PC with Windows 98SE. The tracks were delivered to me for the final mix, an interesting and delicate and lengthy process as we had ambient sound, voice over, dubbed FX and the music. One of the problems with mixing is that I listen to the mix on studio speakers and a lot gets lost when played back on regular consumer speakers, even more so when recorded to VHS and played back on a regular TV.

Then we discovered that the AMPS time limit is 15 minutes so back to the edit suite and some heavy duty trimming. In this case the effect was very positive and the program improved as a result. It was a lot of fun and we are ready with our next script.

(Continued from page 4)

timeline the number instantly identifies which bin a clip came from and if I need to revisit a clip it takes seconds to find it. Editing is about creating a rhythm and for me it is better if I can work in a rhythm as well, just my way, hope it helps.



(Continued from page 3)

of amateur moviemakers. He has been active as an amateur moviemaker for 50 years and has just completed his 79th film. He is the recipient of many national and amateur awards.

I missed the talk but here is what the program said about it. He believes that any producer should insure that his actors will look their best and use makeup for their specific roles. Wally has accumulated a veritable formulary of makeup materials, typically available in all households, Do you need a bloody scar, a teary expression in the eyes? Wally will reveal the secrets for a successful makeup.

I'm sorry I missed the talk but I have seen many fine examples of Wally's make up skills in movies he has sent me. I'm always impressed with the effort he must expend to create the props, the costumes and scenery for his movies and his care in assuring appropriate make up.

Although I arrived late I felt that the CONVENTION RECIPE was fulfilled. for me and all attendees. Here is the recipe: 3 1/2 cups of camaraderie, 2 gallons of wonderful movies, 10 tablespoons exchange of ideas. 3 ounces new equipment, unmeasured rays of sunshine. Mix ingredients until dissolved.

To Mary Ellen Ecklund, Convention general Chairperson, your team did themselves proud.

Mix and Match

By Stan Smith

If you are a hobbyist videomaker like I am, you shoot whatever and whenever you can. You don't have the skills or resources to create movies other than with what you are able to video whenever the opportunity presents itself. Then you work on putting a story together. Sort of "Mix and Match" or working with what you've got.

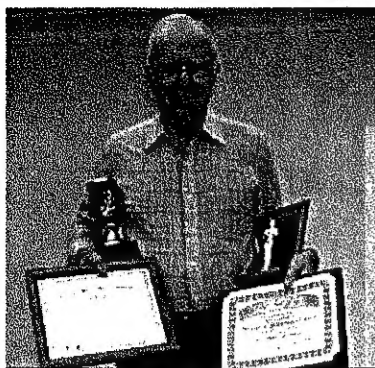
A couple of years ago I was invited to watch the implosion of student dormitory, damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, at San Francisco State University. I knew this was a once in a lifetime opportunity to view this type of event. It was an opportunity to video a spectacular show, but what to do with it after. How could I put together a story, worth showing and maybe good enough for a contest? Before the event I knew I wanted to make a story out of this opportunity using the demolition of the building as a climax. The implosion alone was spectacular, but not as story in itself. My idea was to make a news story. The title would be "We Interrupt This Broadcast" At the time there was a lot of activity and threats, from anti government American militant survivalist groups, and

that could fit in well. But if I were to do a newscast I would surely need a lot more than the one story. That's where the mix and match comes in. I went through my archives of videos I have taken over a period of years, looking for footage that I could use as a TV news broadcast. It didn't matter when the videos were taken as long as it was generic. I realized I had video of President Clinton speaking to Construction Union Conference in Washington D.C. That could fit in perfectly: that the terrorists were demanding an audience with the president or they would blow the building. Even though the video was taken at the Washington Hilton, we have a Hilton in San Francisco, and I could use the same theme just transfer it across country. This gave me my lead news story; the president being in San Francisco to attend a union convention. But I needed more to build on. I also had a video of an investigation of a drive by shooting on the freeway that runs behind my house. What better story to tie into the terrorist plot than the police blocking off half of the freeway surrounding the victim's car. There was, of course, no way of being able to tell it was the victim's car so I could use it anyway I wanted. I wanted more than the one story so back to the archives. I also wanted some human-interest type stories. A year before I had taken videos of one of my daughters acting

as a TV reporter interviewing baseball fans at the last game the San Francisco Giants would play at the old stadium, Candlestick Park. I also had taken videos at the new Pacific Bell Park. It was for another story I had planned. I pulled out videos of Mayor Willie Brown and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney dedicating a housing project financed by union pension funds. This was just coincidental, but fit in perfectly with my union convention story. A meeting of the Northern California Packard Club, old cars, touring the newly refurbished City Hall, and a clip of the Blue Angels over the Golden Gate Bridge rounded out the news stories. This was all the archival video I would need. All I needed to do was shoot the studio scene. My wife was to be the anchorperson, and myself and another daughter were to be the on scene reporters.

This is an example of why we as amateur videomakers should shoot events when the opportunity arises, and save them for future films. If we don't have the time, resources, ability or desire to put together a story then shoot it and mix and match later.

I was about two thirds finished with "We Interrupt This Broadcast" when September 11 happened, and it would have been inappropriate to go ahead with the story. Oh well, the best-laid plans of mice and men. . .



Roger Garretson with AMMA, TBW and AMPS awards



Mary Ellen Ecklund
Convention Chairperson



Jim & Hattie Beach receive TBW award from Vic Brown



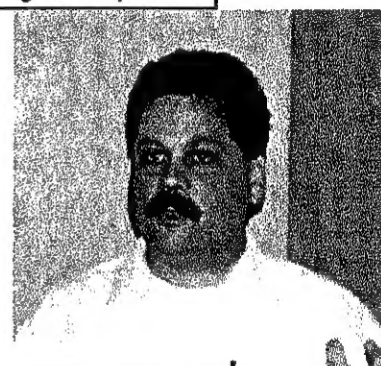
The Saturday night banquet



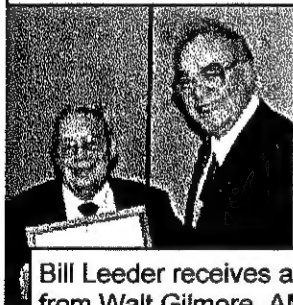
Sid Laverents talked about his production "Multiple SiDosis"



Walt Gilmore presents Best "Club Award" to Howard Lindenmeyer



Matt Jenkins during his presentation



Bill Leeder receives award from Walt Gilmore, AMPS President



Stan Whitsett (R) receives an award from Walt Gilmore

Wally Shaw (L) receives award from Malcomb Colditz, AMMA President



Upcoming Festivals

Close Date	Festival name and address for forms			Open to	Subject	Format	Time Limit	Entry Fee	Award	Show Dates
June 1, 2003	Cotswold Int'l Film & Video Festival England Visit www.cotswoldfilmvideofest.co.uk			AB-CDE	G	NTSC- M PAL-MNQR Film-HJ	20min ABC 25min D	\$12 A \$ 7 BC \$18 D	VU	Sept 5-6 2003
A Amateur B College C Grade 1-12		D Independent E Professional F Restricted		G Open	H S8 J 16mm K VHS M SVHS	N Mini DV O other	S Regional T Exceptions U Cash V Trophies	W Certificates X Other Award		Y Members Z Non Members



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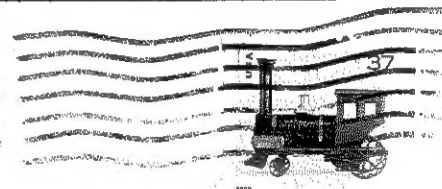
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